

How Extroverts Can Communicate Well with Introverts

August 30, 2011 Posted by [Martha Newman, J.D., PCC, TopLawyerCoach, LLC](#)



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Tips for Bridging the Communication Gap

Lawyers are always put to the test when they are required to communicate with people who are opposite their personalities.

Extroverts, in particular, face a huge barrier when dealing with introverted people. Instead of understanding their characteristics, extroverted lawyers get frustrated over their introverted clients' and colleagues' shy, quiet tendencies. Sometimes these types of people are accused of not being forthcoming or, worse, difficult to deal with.

In her book, [***Self-Promotion for Introverts®: The Quiet Guide to Getting Ahead***](#), Nancy Ancowitz offers several solutions for dealing with this type of communication gap. Here, she provides ten ways extroverts can communicate well with introverts.

1. **Welcome introverts to state their opinions, but avoid putting them on the spot.** Distribute an agenda and ask for our input privately, by e-mail, prior to a meeting to give them time to compose our thoughts.

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2. **Avoid asking introverts questions that they may experience as too personal or invasive;** be patient with their need to get to know you over time.
3. **Limit small talk** to the beginning of a conversation, and get to the more substantive parts more quickly.
4. Just as you may have a breadth of knowledge on many topics, **appreciate introverts for their depth of knowledge** about a few topics.
5. **Make appointments** with introverts rather than dropping by unannounced.
6. **Respect introverts' need for private space.** Do not stand too close during a conversation or reach into our space.
7. Remember that what you find stimulating (e.g., multitasking) may be overwhelming for introverts; **sometimes they need to quietly focus on one thing at a time.**
8. **Consider meeting with your introverted colleagues in a quiet space** to help ensure minimal interruptions. Do something more social before and after the meeting if you need more people time.
9. **Give introverts time alone** to do their best thinking and allow for sufficient breaks during meetings.
10. **Recognize that introverts tend to undersell their accomplishments and potential contributions.**

As a professional, how do you communicate with people who are opposite your personality? Share your thoughts.

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